Title:	**Education Data Spotlight – Students with a Disability**
As Related To:	☒ Goal One: Develop and support policies to close the achievement and opportunity gaps. ☐ Goal Two: Develop comprehensive accountability, recognition, and supports for students, schools, and districts. ☒ Goal Three: Ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet career and college ready standards. ☐ Goal Four: Provide effective oversight of the K-12 system. ☐ Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	☒ Policy Leadership ☒ System Oversight ☐ Advocacy ☐ Communication ☐ Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	Key Questions: • How is the population of students with a disability in Washington changing with repsect to disability type and overall population? • How does the academic performance of students with a disability differ by disability category and status? • How is the reporting on students with a disability complicated by the interaction between other student characteristics?
Possible Board Action:	☒ Review ☐ Adopt ☐ Approve ☐ Other
Materials Included in Packet:	☒ Memo ☐ Graphs / Graphics ☐ Third-Party Materials ☐ PowerPoint
Synopsis:	Students with a disability (SWD) are aggregated into a single group regardless of disability type, which makes it unclear to the school staff which subset of students require particular supports. While the overall population of SWDs increased modestly over the previous five years, the number and percentages of each disability type is changing, and this is important because educational outcomes differ by disability category. Focus Schools identified on the basis of low performance of the SWD group are clustered in central Washington and the Puget Sound regions. The educational performance appears to be partly associated with poverty levels and partly associated with other student characteristics such as mobility, homelessness, foster care status, and migrant status. To ensure the most accurate high-stakes school identifications, an accountability system should seek ways in which to conduct deeper disaggregations of group data.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Policy Considerations

Under Goal 1 of the 2015-2018 Strategic Plan for the State Board of Education, 1.A.1. states that the Board shall "Analyze achievement and opportunity gaps through deeper disaggregation of student demographic data." The Board will learn how the students with a disability assessment data that is typically lumped into a single SWD student group can be disaggregated more deeply for the purpose of better identifying achievement and opportunity gaps.

Summary

In summary:

- In Washington, the number of students with a disability (SWD) increased by approximately 7500 over the last five years but the percentage of SWD of the total student population has remained relatively constant.
- Students with a specific learning disability are the most numerous but students with autism are the fastest growing group.
- Qualitative survey data show that educators have high expectations for students with a disability and perceive them as being successful in the classroom but nearly 70 percent are three or more grade levels behind.
- Performance gaps based on disability status as measured by the most recent NAEP reading and math administrations are large and widening.
- Academic performance differs by disability type:
    - Students with orthopedic, visual, and other health impairment are the highest performing of the students with a disability.
    - Students with traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, and intellectual disabilities are the lowest performing of the students with a disability.
- Academic performance of the students with a disability group is loosely tied to geographic region and regional poverty status.
    - Higher performing SWD student groups are more likely to be located in the Puget Sound region as compared to other parts of the state.
    - Lower performing SWD student groups are more likely to be located in the central and south central part of the state.
- The performance levels of SWD student groups are related to disability status but are also in some manner associated with other student characteristics such as poverty status, mobility, homelessness, migrant status, and foster care status.

Discussion

The reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) is the law ensuring educational and other services to children with disabilities throughout the nation (learn more here http://idea.ed.gov/). Through IDEA, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) defines and recognizes 14 disability categories that are briefly defined at the end of this memo. To meet USED reporting requirements, the OSPI disaggregates and reports on this group of students by disability category, age, race/ethnicity, school level, gender, English Language Learner (ELL) status, and classroom placement. The USED requires this deep disaggregation (in part) to ensure that every student receives the specialized instruction described in each student's Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). If the IEP is well designed and implemented with fidelity, students with a disability would be expected to demonstrate educational outcomes in a manner commensurate with non-disabled students.

The USED does not require the disaggregation of assessment and graduation data for students with a disability beyond the broad category of Students with a Disability (SWD). In other words, all of the educational outcome data for students with a disability are aggregated to the SWD student group without regard to any other criteria. The National Center for Learning Disabilities (learn more here http://www.ncld.org/) contends that combining the performance of several student subgroups (as is done here) does nothing to help schools identify how to go about targeting instruction to the students who comprise the group.

To aggregate all SWDs into a single student group would be comparable to placing all non-White into a student group and examining group performance. In the latter instance, the low performance of one student group would be expected to be masked by the higher performance of another group. The overall performance of the non-White student group might be lower than the performance of the White student group but it would be unclear to the school staff which subset of students require targeted supports. The same would hold true where all SWDs are placed into a single student group and compared from one school to another, as it may not be totally fair to compare the performance of SWD students from different schools because the make-up (based on disability types and other student information) of the SWD group at one school may be dramatically different from the SWD student group at the other school.

Distribution of Students with a Disability

As shown in Table 1, the increase of 7621 students with a disability (SWD) in the five-year period from 2009-10 to 2013-14 represents a 5.8 percent increase in the number of SWD students in Washington public schools. While the number and percentage of students with a disability fluctuate mildly from one year to the next, the measures are relatively steady over time.

Table 1: Shows the number and percentage of students with a disability in Washington public schools over the previous five years.

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Number of SWD students in public schools*	131.980	136,014	138,001	136,099	139,601
Percentage of SWD students in public schools*	12.8	13.1	13.3	13.0	13.2

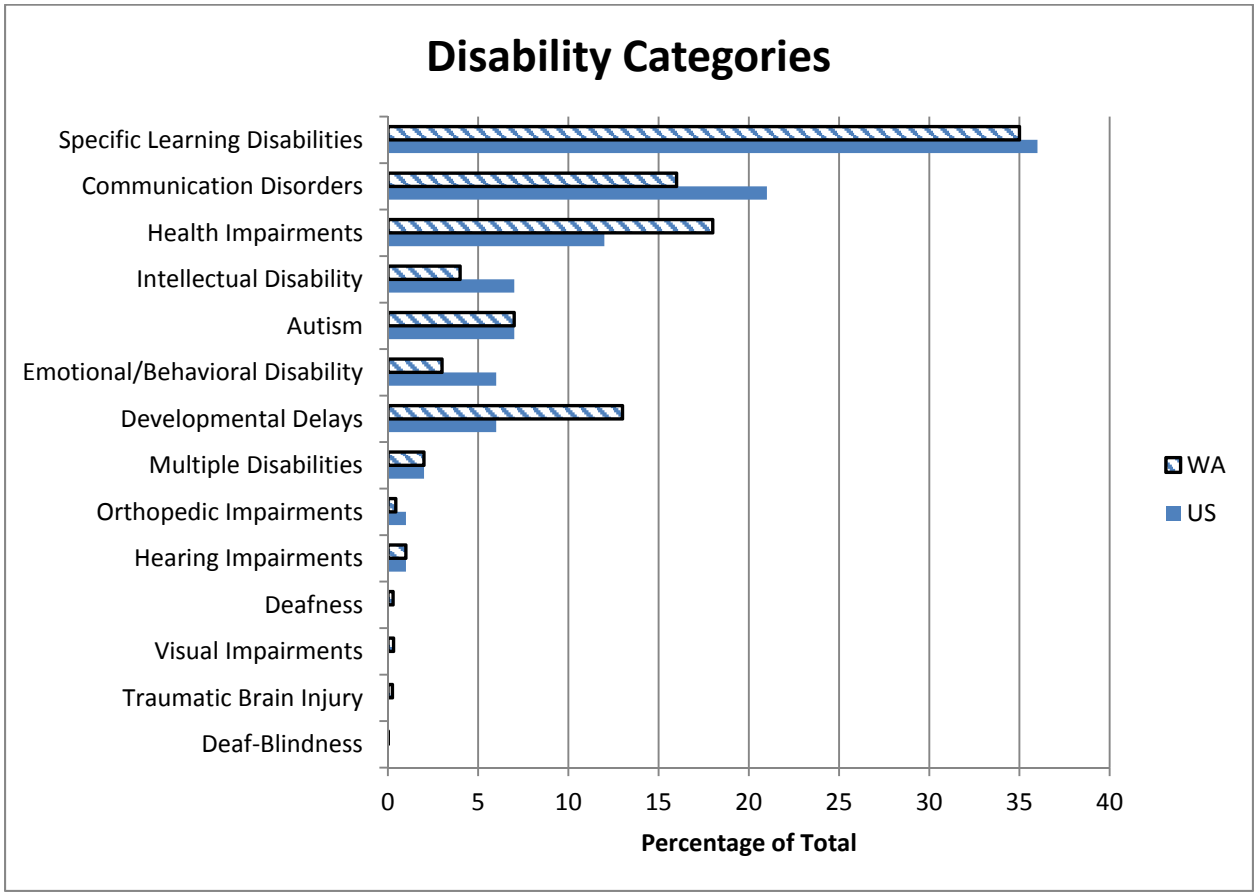
*Note: data from http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us.

The number and percentage of students by IDEA disability category (Chart 1) are quite variable. The chart shows that the number and percentage of students with a specific learning disability are far greater than other disability category. Students identified for special education services due to communication disorders, health impairments, or developmental delays are the next most numerous.

The distribution of the SWD student group by disability type is similar to that for the United States, but differences for the communication disorders, health impairments, and developmental delay categories are noteworthy.

Students with autism comprise approximately seven percent of the overall SWD population but make up the fastest growing disability category in Washington, where the group increased in size by 27 percent in just four years (Table 2). The number of students with health impairments and visual impairments are on the rise while the numbers of students for several of the categories are decreasing. In summary, students with a specific learning disability are by far the most numerous but students with autism comprise the fastest growing disability category.

Chart 1: Shows the distribution of students with a disability by disability category for Washington and the United States.



Students with disabilities are not evenly distributed across Washington. In the 2013-14 school year, students with a disability comprised approximately 13.2 percent of the public school population. Some districts have fewer than 3.0 percent SWDs in the district while a couple of other districts report more than 30 percent SWDs. The 16 school districts highlighted in Figure 1 report a district SWD participation rate greater than 20 percent, but when suppression rules are applied to the Index, 109 districts do not have a school with a reportable and assessed SWD population.

Table 2: Shows the number of students and percent change by disability category in Washington public schools over the previous four years.

Disability Category	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Percent Change
Developmental Delays	7375	7408	7533	7807	5.9
Emotional/Behavioral Disability	4693	4505	4546	4505	-4.0
Orthopedic Impairments	491	473	425	415	-15.5
Health Impairments	22,356	22,919	23,339	23,759	6.3
Specific Learning Disabilities	44,772	44,949	45,088	45,334	1.3
Intellectual Disability	4600	4659	4703	4748	3.2
Multiple Disabilities	2619	2614	2606	2646	1.0
Deafness	358	341	317	291	-18.7
Hearing Impairments	806	800	794	790	-2.0
Visual Impairments	337	346	358	380	12.8
Deaf-Blindness	24	26	17	16	-33.3
Communication Disorders	17,146	16,816	16,678	16,412	-4.3
Autism	7795	8593	9266	9931	27.4
Traumatic Brain Injury	331	309	286	301	-9.1

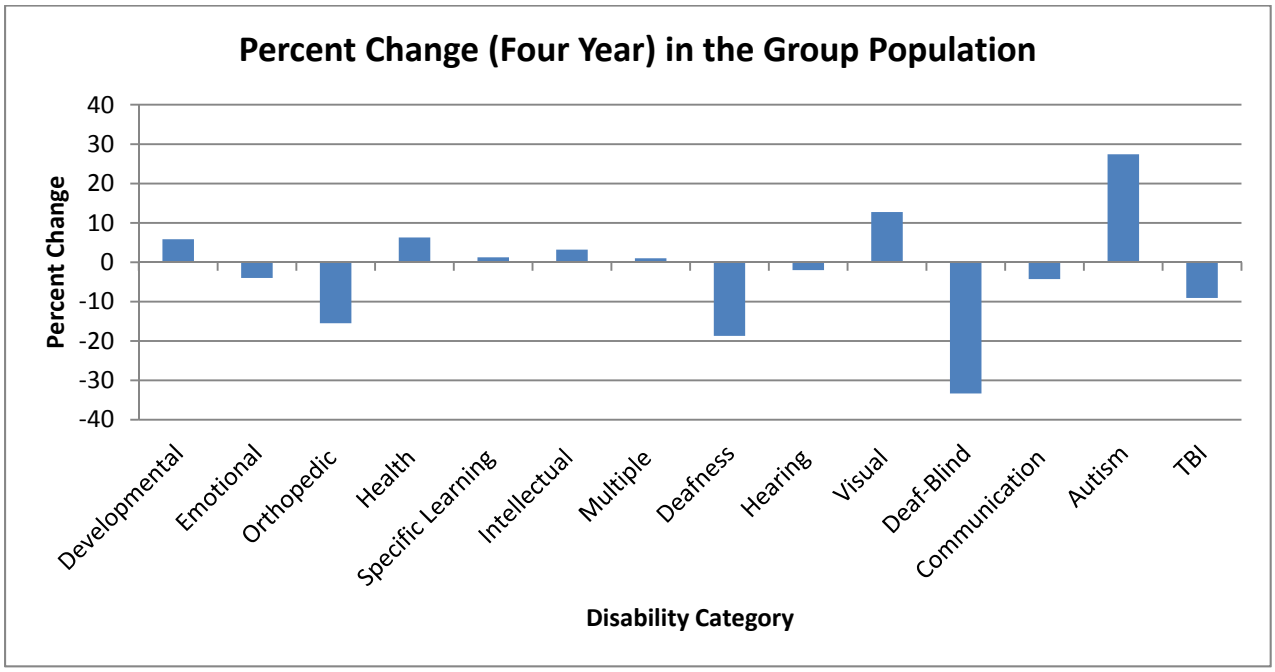
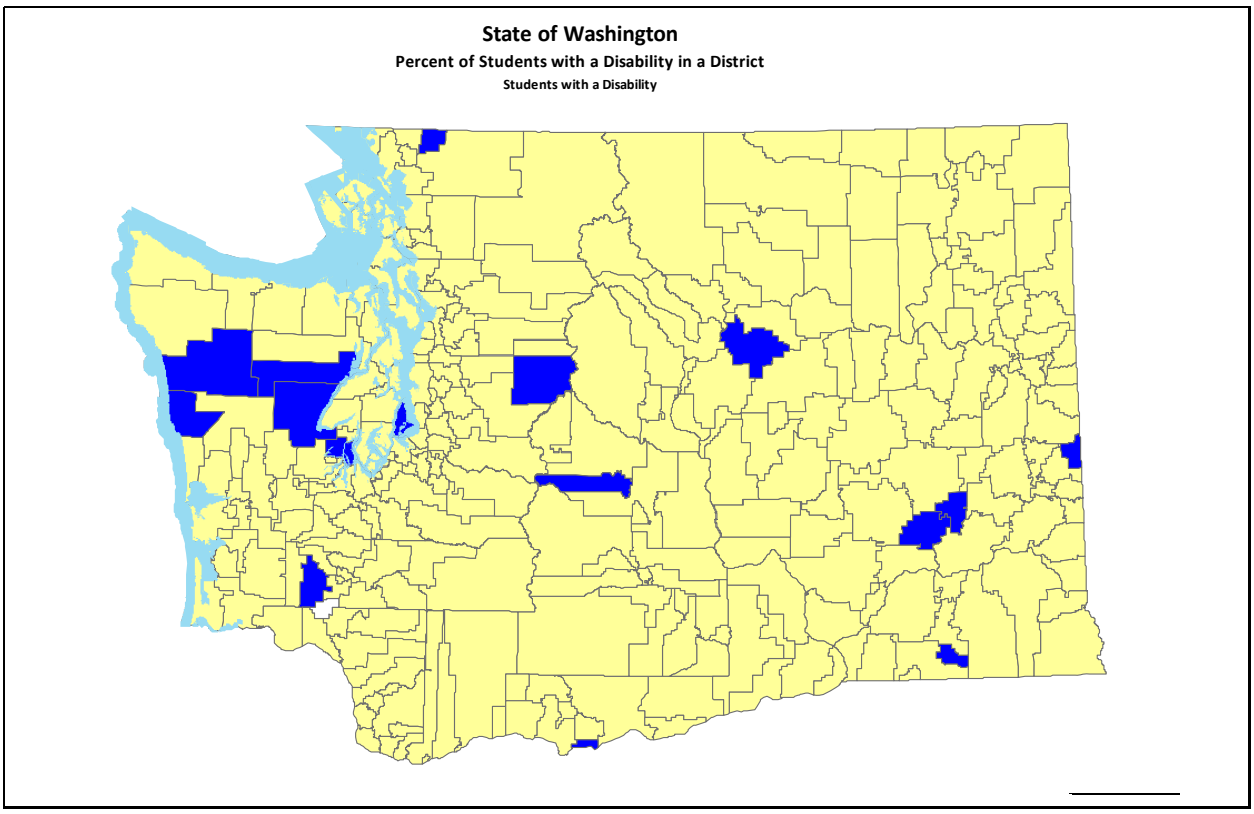


Figure 1: Shows the school districts serving a high percentage (greater than 20 percent) of students with a disability.



Academic Performance of Students with a Disability

Through the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) funded by the USED, researchers collected educational data on a national sample of students participating in special education (learn more here http://www.nlts2.org/). One of the studies (found at http://www.nlts2.org/reports/2003_11/nlts2_report_2003_11_ch4.pdf) examined the academic performance of secondary students with disabilities framed in course grades, teachers' perceptions about how well students with disabilities keep up with classmates, and performance on standardized reading and math assessments.

Through survey data, the NLTS-2 reports that students with a disability receive course grades of a C or higher at a rate of 91.6 percent for middle and high school general academic classes (Table 3). The survey also showed that over 97 percent of educators had the expectation that students with a disability keep up in academic classes and the perception that nearly three-fourths of students with a disability were keeping up in the academic classes. After collectively considering the three pieces of data, the reader would conclude that most students with disabilities are earning average or higher grades and are mostly keeping up with their non-disabled peers. However, when standardized assessments are analyzed, approximately 87.4 percent of students with a disability are one or more years below grade level in reading and math and two-thirds of all the students were three or more grade levels behind. The standardized test scores shows that students with disabilities are an average of 3.6 years behind expected performance for their grade level in reading and math.

The study reports a weak to moderate and positive correlation (Pearson R = 0.340) between the educators' perception and grades. In other words, the more the educator perceives the student as

keeping up in the class the student is awarded higher grades. On the other hand, a Pearson R = 0.005 is reported for the relationship between grades for academic courses and performance on standardized assessments. This means that there is virtually no relationship between grades and test results. The latter result should not come as a surprise, as students' IEPs often include some form of grading accommodations.

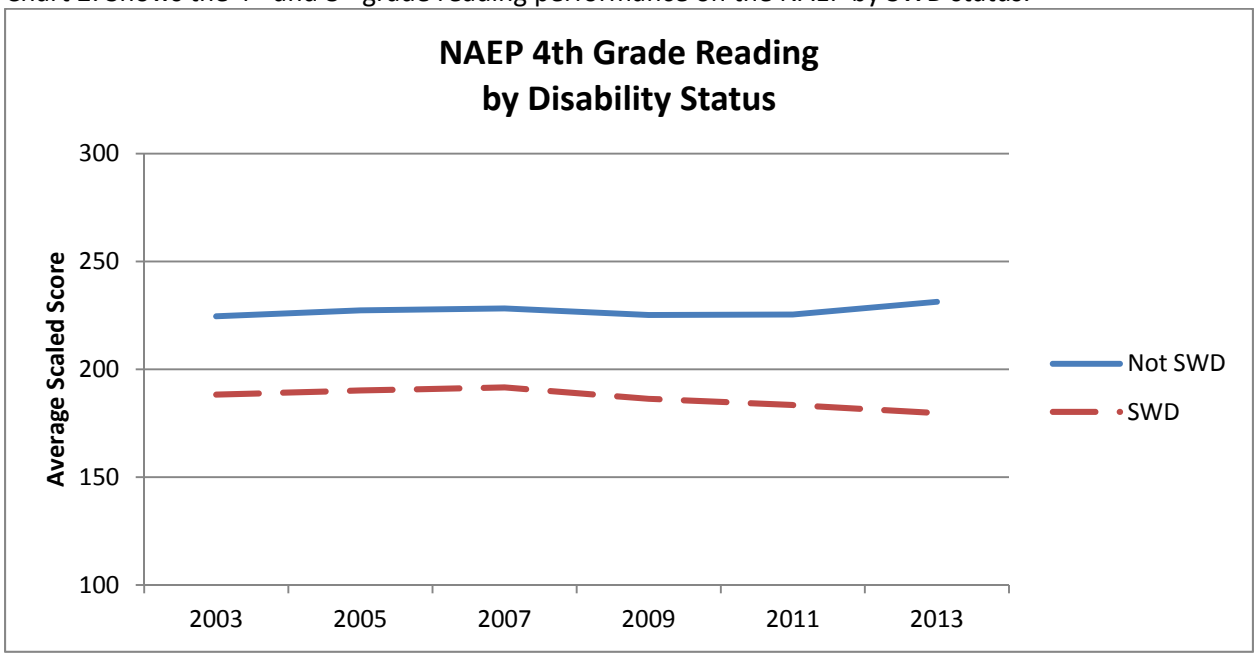
Table 3: Performance and educators' perception data from the NLTS-2.

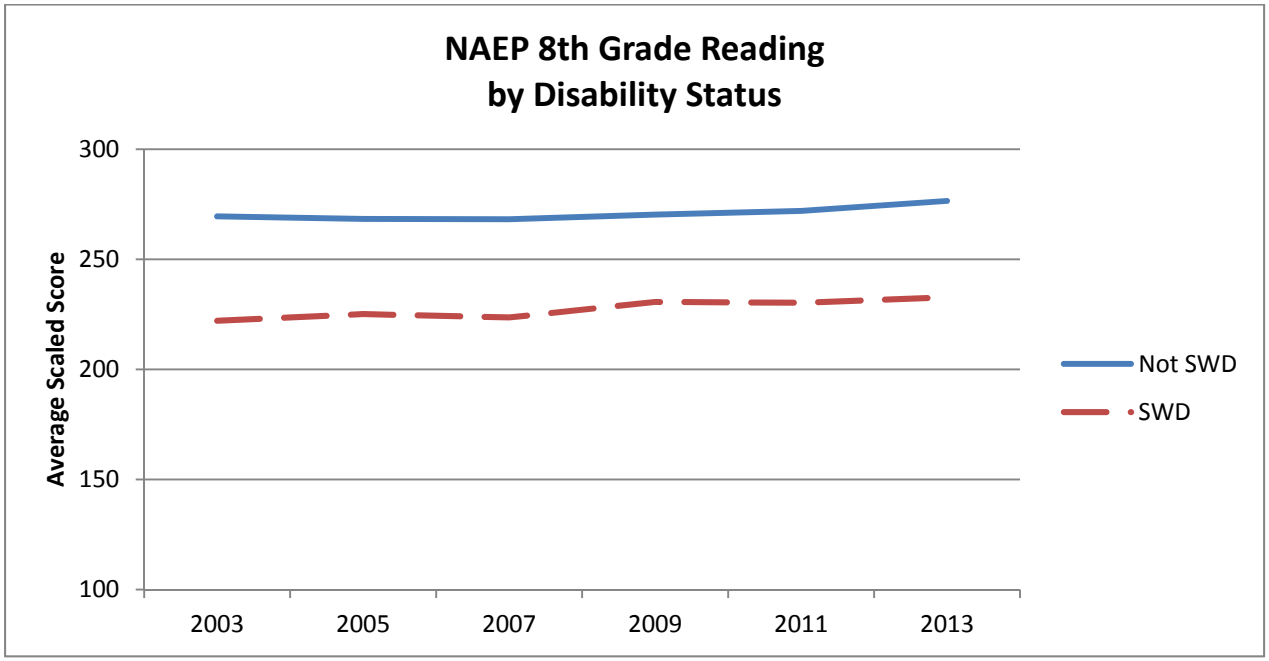
Academic Measure	Percentage
Students whose grades are mostly:	
As and Bs	30.2
Cs	61.4
Ds and Fs	8.4
Educators' Expectations and Perceptions	
Students are expected to keep up in general education academic classes	97.4
Students who do keep up in general education academic classes	74.4
Students actual performance	
Less than one grade level behind	12.6
1 to 2.9 grade levels behind	20.8
3 to 4.9 grade levels behind	40.5
More than 5 grade levels behind	26.2

By definition, students with a disability are affected with a condition that adversely affects their educational outcomes. As a direct result of the condition or impairment, the educational outcomes of students with a disability would be expected to be lower than those for students without a disability or impairment. The lower performance of students with a disability is evident in the NAEP assessment data shown in Chart 2. See that for both the 4th and 8th grade reading, the Washington students with a disability (SWD) group scores approximately 35 to 52 scaled score points lower than the not students with a disability (Not SWD) group. Although not shown here, the same trends and performance gap are evident for the NAEP math assessment data.

The NAEP 4th and 8th grade reading and math assessment data from the 2003 and 2013 administrations were analyzed to determine whether the performance gap is narrowing. The NAEP State Comparison online tool found at http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/statecomparisons/ computes the average scaled score differences for a NAEP assessment between two administrations for the groups being compared; in this case, students with a disability and students not with a disability. The gap differences for each of the four NAEP assessments were computed separately, averaged, and summarized in Chart 3. In this analysis a positive value means that the average scaled score difference (performance gap) showed an increase in 2013 as compared to 2003, so in this case a negative value means the gap was reduced over time.

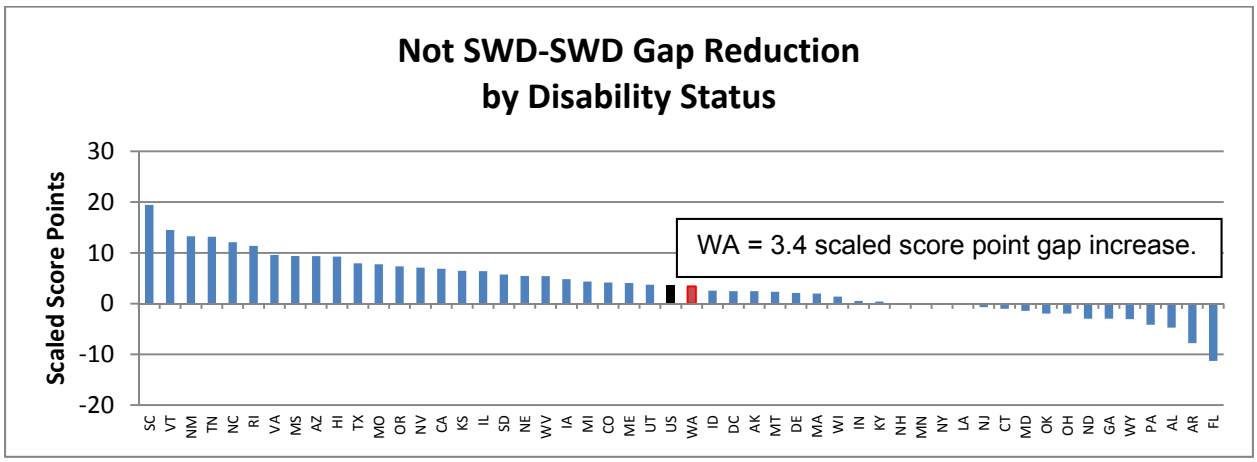
Chart 2: Shows the 4th and 8th grade reading performance on the NAEP by SWD status.





After the Not SWD-SWD gaps for each of the four NAEP assessments are computed and averaged, the data show that the Not SWD-SWD performance gap increased 3.4 scaled score points which is similar to the U.S. average performance gap increase of 3.6 scaled score points. This analysis indicates that the performance gaps for Washington students are large and widened from 2003 to 2013. An increasing performance or opportunity gap was evident for approximately two-thirds of the states.

Chart 3: Shows how the Washington Not SWD-SWD performance gap reduction compares to the reductions of the other states.



The performance gap shown from the NAEP assessment results is also evident in the Washington statewide assessment data. The 2013-14 assessment data (Table 4) from the 2014 Achievement Index show the combined reading and math proficiency rates for student groups with and without a disability. The data show that (as a group) students with a disability perform at a rate of 45 to 50 percentage points lower than students without a disability, regardless of school level.

Table 4: Reading and math (combined) proficiency rates by school level and by SWD status.

School Level	Students with a Disability				Not Students with a Disability		
	% Proficient Reading and Math Combined				% Proficient Reading and Math Combined		
	Low	High	Median		Low	High	Median
Elementary Schools*	0.0	100.0	31.0		0.0	97.9	75.6
Middle Schools*	1.9	66.9	21.0		33.3	97.5	71.3
High Schools*	6.0	73.0	33.6		57.2	99.4	89.0

*Note: table is based on 2013-14 assessment data from 812 elementary schools, 315 middle schools, and 156 high schools as reported in the 2014 Achievement Index.

Tables 3 and 4 provide evidence that students with a disability (as a group) perform far below grade level and far below their non-disabled peers. However, it is important to note that not all students with disabilities perform below grade level and some schools with substantial numbers of students with disabilities show very high proficiency rates from the students with a disability group. Table 5 shows the reading and math proficiency rates for selected schools with high performing SWD student groups based on 2014 state assessment data.

Other analyses from the NLTS-2 provide evidence that academic performance differs in reading (Chart 4) and math (Chart 4) by disability type. For reading, approximately 25 percent of students with a disability classified as orthopedic, emotional, visual, or other health impairment were near or above grade level. These four groups are the highest performing in reading, while students identified in the deaf/blind, traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, and intellectual disability groups are the lowest performing.

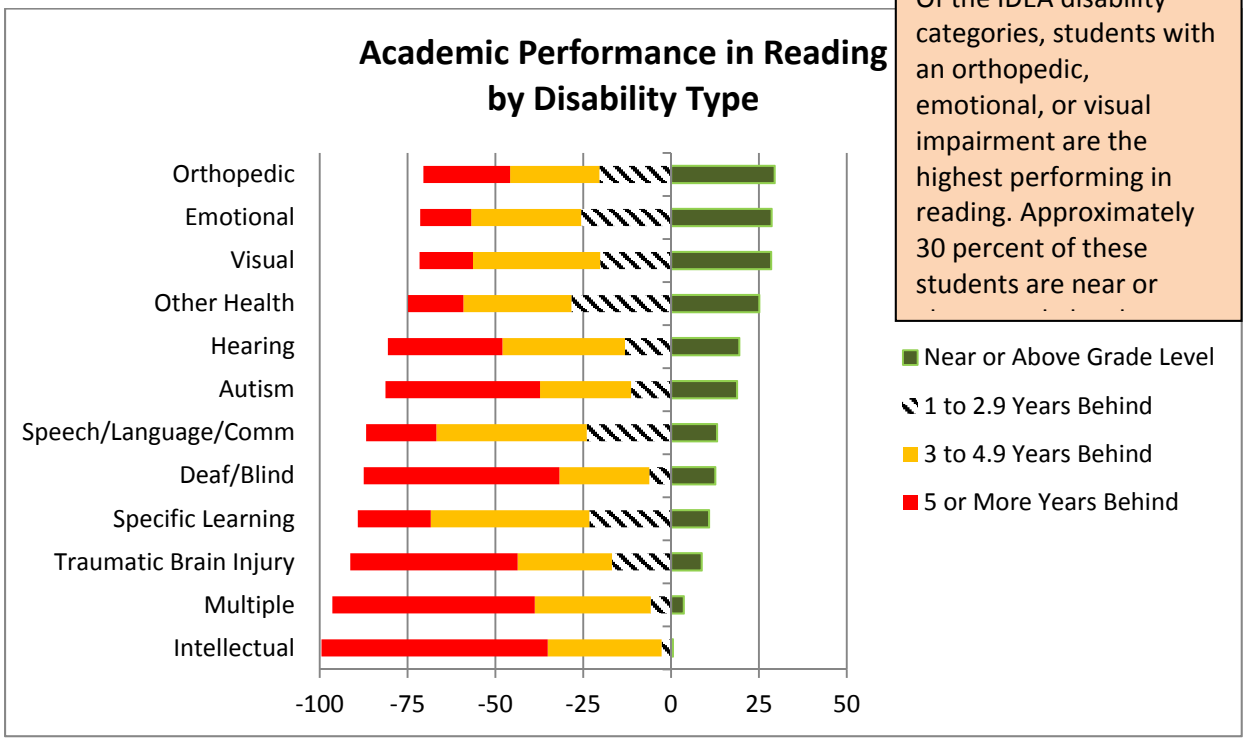
Table 5: Shows the schools with the highest performing SWD student group as derived from the 2014 Achievement Index.

District	School	% FRL	SWD N	Percent Proficient for SWD Group			
				2014 Reading	2014 Math	2014 R & M*	3-Year R & M*
SEATTLE PS	JOHN HAY ES	16	31	84	68	76	74
SEATTLE PS	THURGOOD MARSHALL ES	30	44	86	84	85	73
SEATTLE PS	WEDGWOOD ES	11	23	78	96	87	85
BAINBRIDGE IS SD	CAPT. CHARLES WILKES	7	22	77	82	80	75
ISSAQUAH SD	DISCOVERY ES	2	30	90	60	75	62
LAKE WASHINGTON	ROSA PARKS ELS	2	23	83	74	78	64
SEATTLE PS	APP AT LINCOLN	2	26	100	100	100	

*Note: R & M means reading and math (combined) proficiency rates.

For math, approximately 20 to 25 percent of students with a disability classified as orthopedic, visual, hearing, or other health impairment were near or above grade level and these were the highest performing groups. Students identified in the autism, traumatic brain injury, multiple disabilities, and intellectual disability groups are the lowest performing. For all of the lowest performing groups by disability for either reading or math, 75 to 98 percent of the students in the group are three or more years behind grade level.

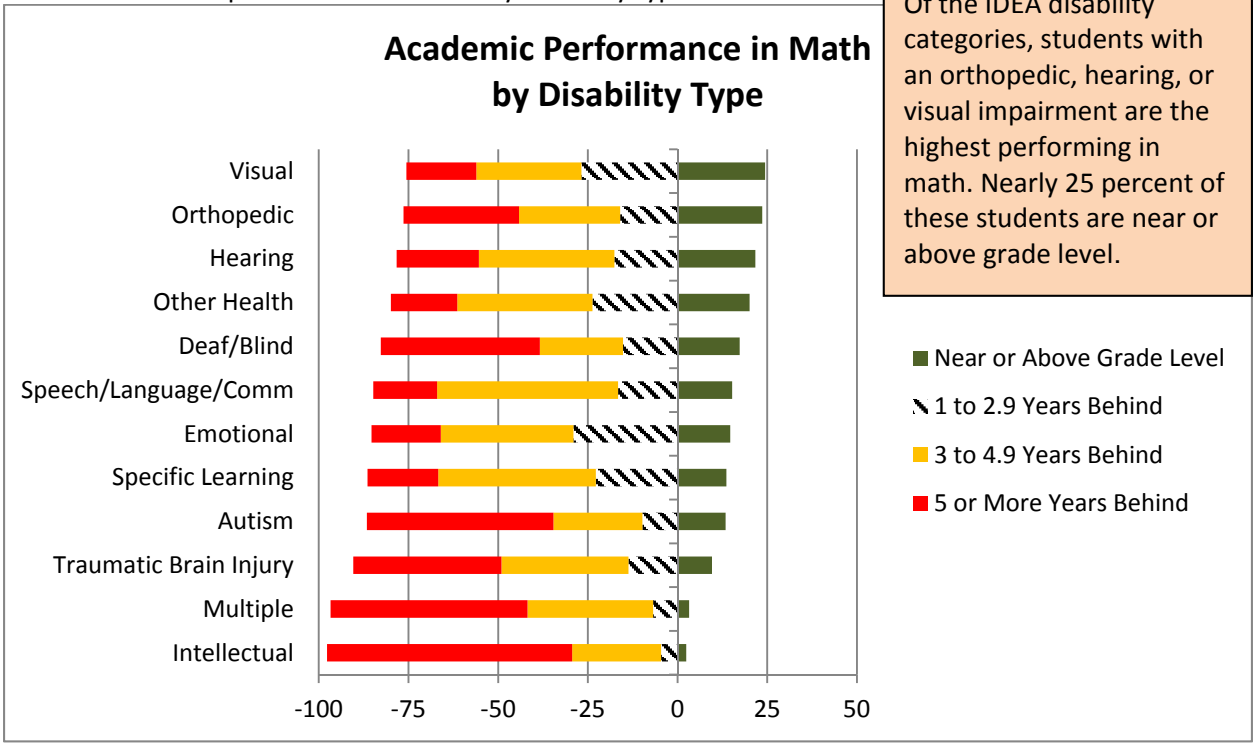
Chart 3: Academic performance in reading by disability type.



Of the IDEA disability categories, students with an orthopedic, emotional, or visual impairment are the highest performing in reading. Approximately 30 percent of these students are near or

To read Chart 3 for students with an orthopedic disability, approximately 30 percent of the students were near or above grade level, 20 percent were 1.0 to 2.9 grade levels behind, 25 percent were 3.0 to 4.9 grade levels behind, and 25 percent were 5 or more grade levels behind.

Chart 4: Academic performance in math by disability type.



Of the IDEA disability categories, students with an orthopedic, hearing, or visual impairment are the highest performing in math. Nearly 25 percent of these students are near or above grade level.

This NLTS-2 data provides compelling evidence that student performance differs by disability category, so when the accountability system lumps all students with a disability into a single group, the students' performance by disability categories becomes indiscernible. All other things being equal, a school with a student with a disability population comprised of mostly emotional and other health impairments would be expected to fare far better than a school with mostly students with multiple impairment and specific learning disabilities. A situation might be created whereby the performance of the aggregated SWD student group tracks disability category rather than student learning or quality of instruction.

The OSPI is preparing a data file for the SBE staff containing statewide assessment data by the IDEA disability categories for Washington students. On account of the heavy workload of the OSPI Student Information Services groups, the data was not delivered in a time frame allowing for an analysis to be included in the board packet, but the analysis will form part of the presentation to the Board on May 13th in Pasco.

Regional Distribution of High and Low Performing SWD Student Groups

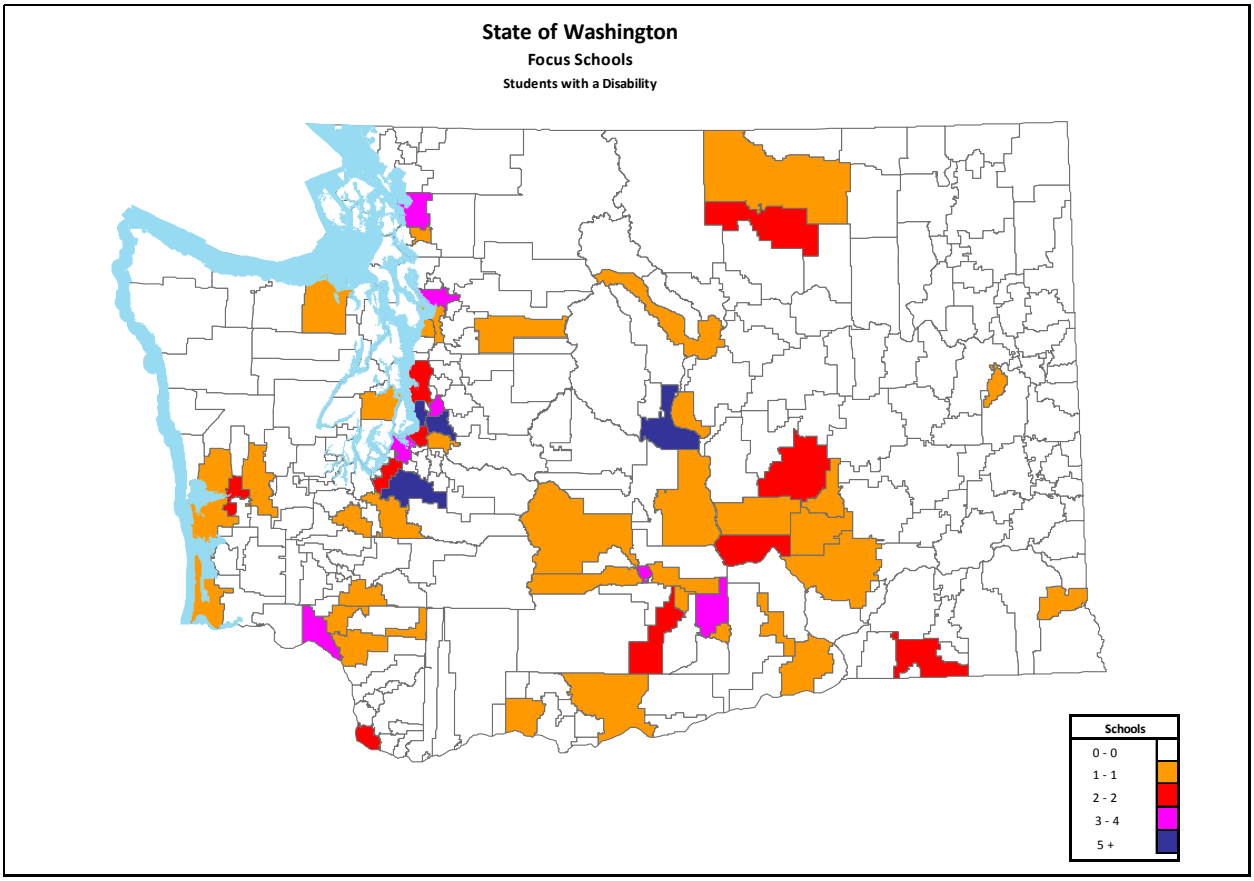
The Achievement Index includes assessment and outcome data for 2201 schools but identifies only 1201 schools for which a three-year average reading and math (combined) proficiency rate could be computed for the SWD student group. To better understand the distribution of the highest and lowest performing schools based on the SWD proficiency rates by region, two analyses were conducted. In this first analysis, the data show that a disproportionately high percentage of schools from ESD 114 (Olympic), ESD 121 (Puget Sound) and ESD 189 (Northwest) populate the top quartile of schools with a reportable SWD student group. The data also show that a disproportionately high percentage of schools with SWD student groups performing in the bottom quartile come from ESD 105 (Yakima), ESD 171 (North Central) and to a lesser degree, ESD 123 (Pasco) and ESD 112 (Vancouver). To summarize:

- There is a clustering of higher performing SWD student groups in the northwestern-most part of the state.

- There is a clustering of lower performing SWD student groups in the central and south central part of the state.

The second analysis simply examines the distribution of Focus Schools identified on the basis of SWD student group performance. Figure 2 shows the districts in which Focus Schools were identified based on the low reading and math (combined) proficiency rates over three years for the SWD student group. By definition, these are the lowest performing subgroups in the state based on reading and math proficiency. The map shows the clustering of Focus Schools in the south central and central part of the state that was identified as part of the analysis mentioned earlier.

Figure 2: Shows the number and distribution of Focus Schools for the 2015-16 school year.



With the knowledge that SWD performance differs by disability category, any characterization of a low (or high) performing school should consider the makeup of the aggregated SWD student group. Consider, for example, a school with an SWD student group comprised of mostly student with multiple disabilities with an average proficiency rate of 13 percent: this student group would be performing far above average based on typical performance for the disability category but the school would still be identified due to the perceived underperformance of the group. In this example, a high-stakes result would be negatively impacting a school whose students would be making higher than typical progress. However, neither the Achievement Index nor the OSPI disaggregate and report on the IDEA disability groups in a manner providing a deeper understanding of the student performance.

Additional analyses revealed that the schools in the ESDs with the higher performing SWD student groups (ESD 114, ESD 121, and ESD 189) have the lowest average percentages of students qualifying for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRL) program. This analysis also shows that the schools in the ESDs

with the lower performing SWD student groups (ESD 105, ESD 171 and ESD 123) have the highest average percentages of students qualifying for the FRL program. In other words:

- Higher performing SWD student groups occur in lower poverty regions
- Lower performing SWD student groups occur in higher poverty regions

So a picture begins to emerge showing a relationship between poverty, SWD performance, and geographic region. With the knowledge that SWD group performance is broadly associated with poverty and disability status, an accountability system might disaggregate more deeply to ensure the most appropriate characterization of schools. Also, a stronger accountability system might encompass designs that consider the additive effect of negative impacts; to be Black, living in poverty, and receiving special education services, and homeless.

Factors that do not appear to systematically vary with ESD include:

- SWD program size - both high and low performing ESDs average approximately 43 students per school in 2014
- SWD percentage - high performing ESDs average approximately 14 percent SWDs of the assessed population and low performing ESDs average approximately 13 percent SWDs of the assessed population in 2014.
- School size - high performing ESDs assessed an average of approximately 274 students per school while and low performing ESDs assessed an average of approximately 261 students per school in 2014.

Even though the Puget Sound area is overall more affluent than other parts of the state, the fact that low performing SWD student groups are localized in this region supports the idea that factors other than poverty may contribute to the overall performance of the SWD student group. The analyses provide evidence that the different performance levels of SWD student groups are related to disability status but are also in some manner associated with other student characteristics such as poverty status, mobility, homelessness, migrant status, and foster care status.

Action

No Board action is proposed.

Please contact Andrew Parr at andrew.parr@k12.wa.us if you have questions about this memo.

Connection between SWDs and other Student Characteristics

Children in Foster Care

Children in Foster Care are 3.5 times more likely to participate in special education as compared to children not in Foster Care. This means that approximately 40 to 50 percent of students in Foster Care receive special education services. The high participation rate should come as no surprise as these children are placed in Foster Care due to a combination of physical or emotional problems stemming from other neglect or abuse.

The life experiences foster children have been subjected to have a profound impact on their educational outcomes, which are among the lowest of all student groups. As a group and at the national level, children who are placed in foster care generally perform lower on standardized assessments, earn lower school grades, and experience more behavior problems and associated out-of-school suspensions and expulsion. In addition to the high participation rate in special education children in the foster care system exhibit higher absenteeism rates and are retained in grade at higher rates.

For Washington, children in Foster Care are among the least successful of any student group. Chart 5 shows that young children in Foster Care perform substantially lower than students in poverty. Chart 6 shows that the low performance of adolescents in Foster Care continue to perform at a low level through middle school, and Chart 7 shows how that low performance impacts high school outcomes.

Chart 5: Shows the 3rd grade reading proficiency rates for children in Foster Care and poverty status.

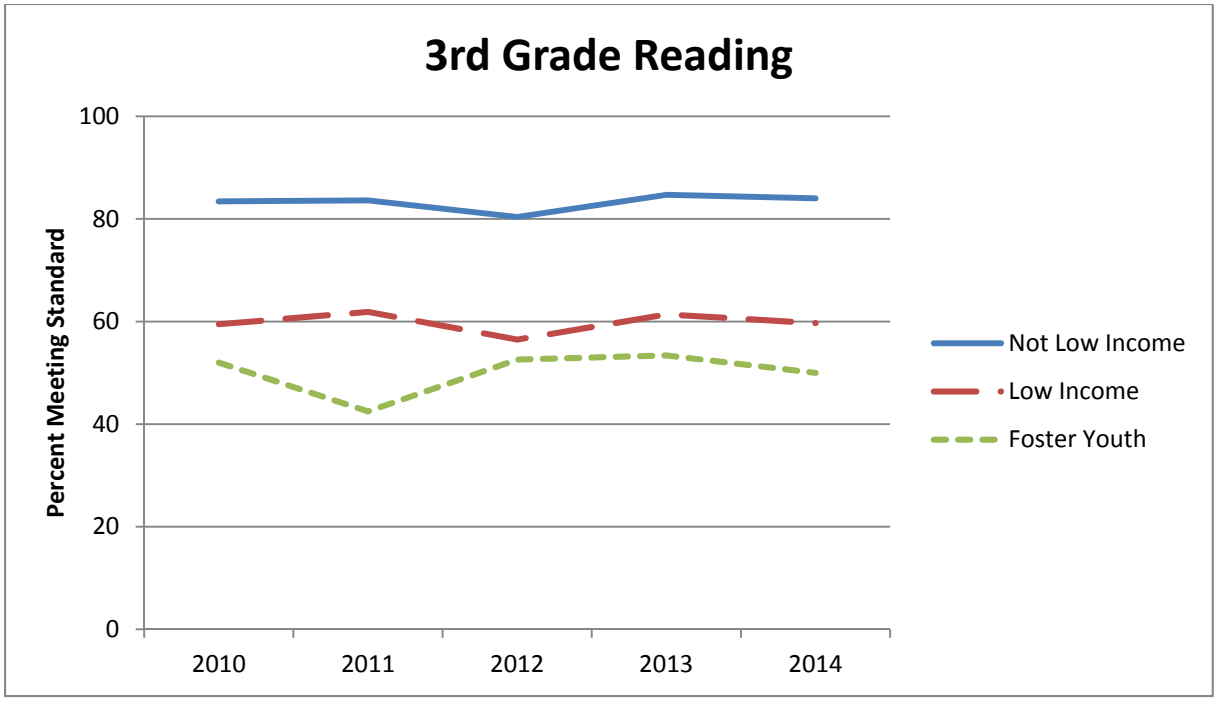


Chart 6: Shows the 8th grade reading and math (combined) proficiency rates for children in Foster Care and poverty status.

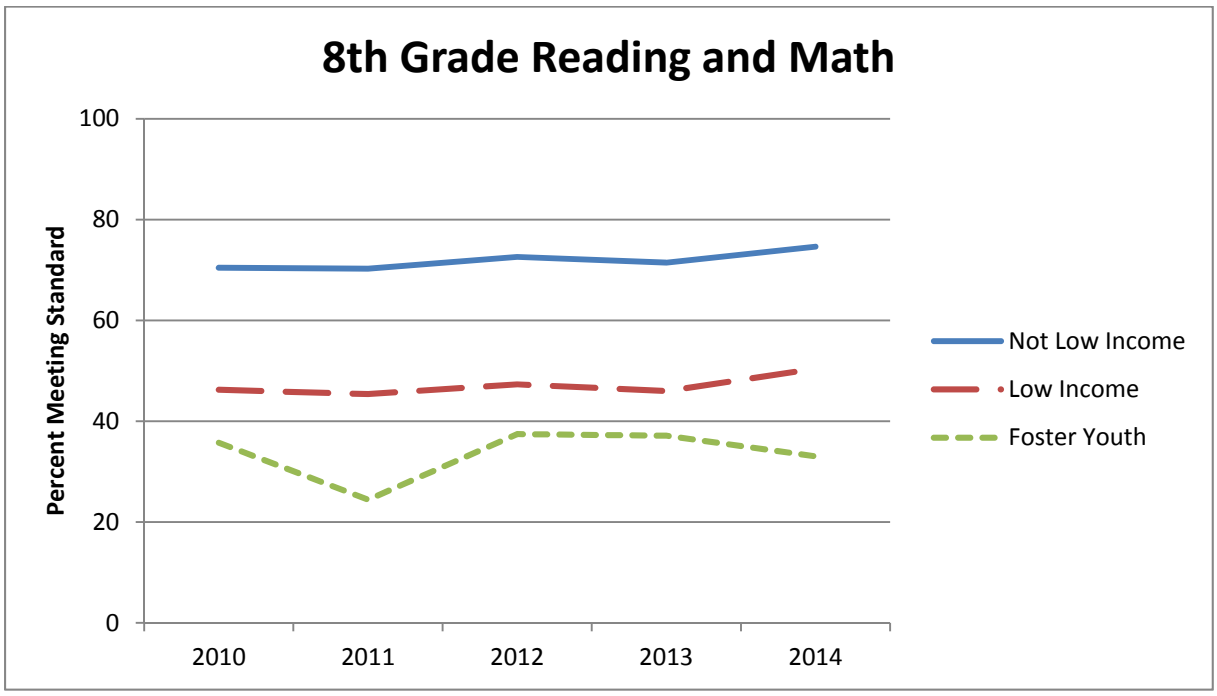
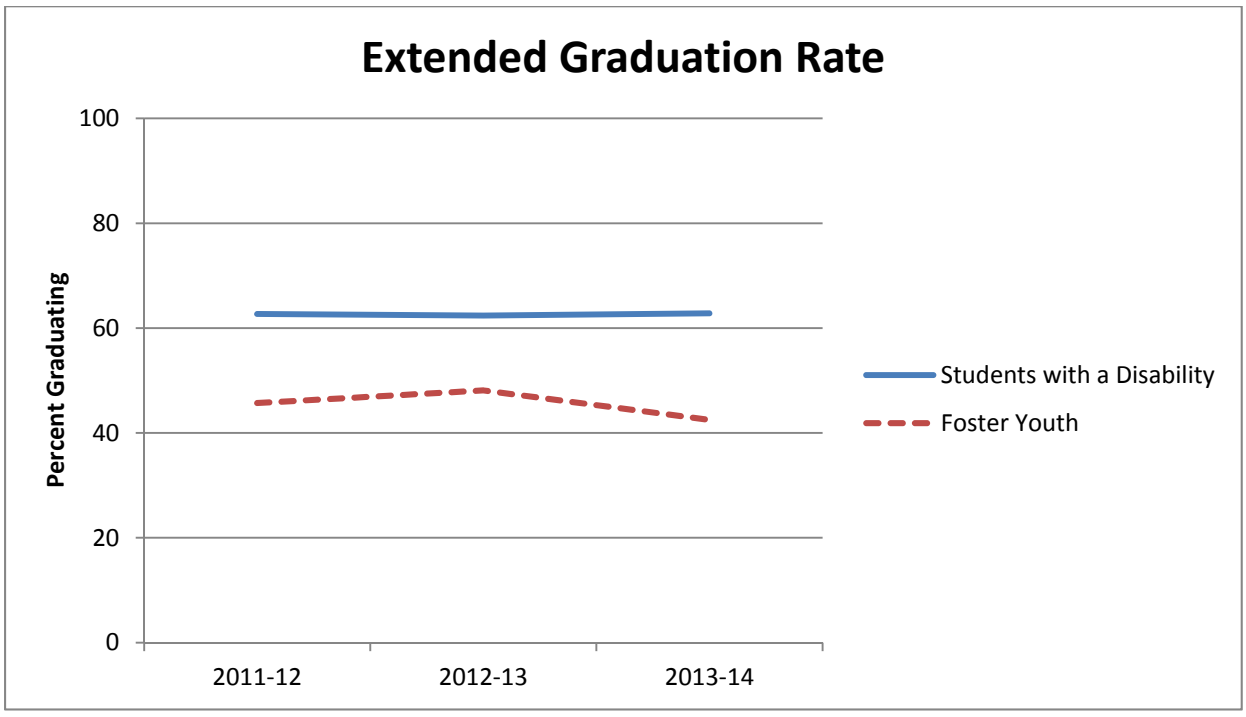


Chart 7: Shows the Extended (Five-Year) graduation rates for students in Foster Care and participating in special education.



It would be safe to say that the low performance of the Foster Care student group is due in part to the high percentage of SWD participation, in addition to characteristics more unique to students in Foster Care such as increased mobility, higher absenteeism, and higher rates of out-of-school disciplinary actions. The additive effect of the negative impacts of students in Foster Care may actually lower the

performance of the SWD student group, but more work will be required to prove this hypothesis. Suffice to say that when including students in Foster Care with special needs in the SWD student group, the interpretation of the aggregated SWD performance becomes more difficult.

Student mobility is known to have a negative relationship on educational performance and outcomes, and is the defining characteristic of migrant students and pervasive for homeless and foster students. The OSPI is preparing a data file for the SBE staff containing statewide mobility data for Washington students. On account of the heavy workload of the OSPI data team, the data was not delivered in a timeframe allowing for an analysis to be included in the board packet, but the analysis will form part of the presentation to the Board on May 13th in Pasco.

Other Information about IDEA Disability Categories

Autism
Autism is a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term autism does not apply if the child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in #5 below.

Deaf-Blindness
Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

Deafness
A hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Developmental Delay
For children from birth to age three (under IDEA Part C) and children from ages three through nine (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication; social or emotional development; or adaptive [behavioral] development.

Emotional Disturbance
This is a broadly defined condition whereby children exhibit one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- The term includes schizophrenia and does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance

Hearing Impairment
An impairment in hearing (permanent or fluctuating) that adversely affects a child's educational performance but is not included under the definition of deafness.

Intellectual Disability
Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning (existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period) that adversely affects a child's educational performance. "Intellectual Disability" is a new term in IDEA. Prior to October 2010, the law used the term "mental retardation."

Multiple Disabilities

Concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness, intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness

Orthopedic Impairment
A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g. Cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

Other Health Impairment
The category is typified by limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that result in limited alertness with respect to the school setting. The impairment must be due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, ADD. or ADHD, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome, and adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability
A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. This includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of intellectual disability; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Speech or Language Impairment
A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury
An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visual Impairment
An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

MIGRANT EDUCATION DATA SPOTLIGHT

Purpose

This memo explores the migrant student group in depth. This memo is intended to provide an overview of data that the Migrant Education experts in Washington look at, how SBE policy work might positively impact migrant student outcomes, and to set the stage for future work. Migrant students are a unique group because they are neither included in the state nor the federal accountability framework as a student subgroup that Adequate Yearly Progress applies to. This makes migrant students less visible to policymakers.

Relevance to the Strategic Plan

This work addresses the following elements of the Board's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan:

- 1.A.1 Analyze achievement and opportunity gaps through deeper disaggregation of student demographic data.
- 1.A.3 Research and promote policy to reduce the loss of instructional time resulting from disciplinary actions, absenteeism, disengagement and promote interventions grounded in an understanding of diverse cultures.
- 1.A.7 Identify strategies and develop a plan for effective outreach to diverse communities in order to gather input, build partnerships and develop policies around specific issues related to closing the opportunity and achievement gap.
- 1.C Promote strategies to strengthen key transition points in a student's education.

Key Questions

- Where are migrant students attending school in Washington? Who are they? Where are they from?
- What are the unique needs of the migrant student group?
- What Board policy work can affect migrant student outcomes?
- What are the pros and cons of including a migrant student group in the state accountability system?
- What would the Board like to understand from future research on migrant students and migrant education?

Available data

Migrant Student Data, Recruitment, and Supports (MSDRS) and OSPI Report Card

OSPI collaborates with Sunnyside School District to maintain the MSDRS dashboard and data reporting tool. This dataset is used to recognize migrant students in need of additional supports and to improve data collection and reporting on migrant students. The data can be disaggregated by ESD or district. The majority of data used in this analysis is from MSDRS. The site provides a wealth of resources on Migrant Education and some resources for the education of students experiencing homelessness. It provides

information on the Portable Assisted Student Sequence, a program described in greater detail later in this memo. According to OSPI Migrant Education staff, some of the most important data for monitoring migrant students are attendance, graduation rate, credit accumulation and, when available, assessment data. The OSPI Report Card reports assessment data on migrant students and was used in this analysis.

Issues with Assessment Data on Migrant Students

OSPI staff in the Bilingual and Migrant Office are engaged in a continuing process of using MSDRS to work with districts improve the collection and reporting of migrant student data in the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS). For instance, districts are now putting greater effort into matching incoming migrant students with their formerly assigned SSIDs instead of creating new SSIDs for incoming migrant students, thus improving the matching of records. Matching CEDARS records to MSDRS records has also improved the ability to collect data on migrant students. These sort of improvements in data collection and reporting make it increasingly possible to monitor student performance data from year-to-year. However, challenges still exist with accurately collecting data on migrant students.

State assessment data on migrant students is limited because they may leave the school during spring assessments or they may be incorrectly tracked from one school district to another. Even if a student takes the exam one year, they may not complete an assessment during the next year or have their records follow them when they switch schools. Thus, the ability to derive student growth model data from migrant student assessment data is limited.

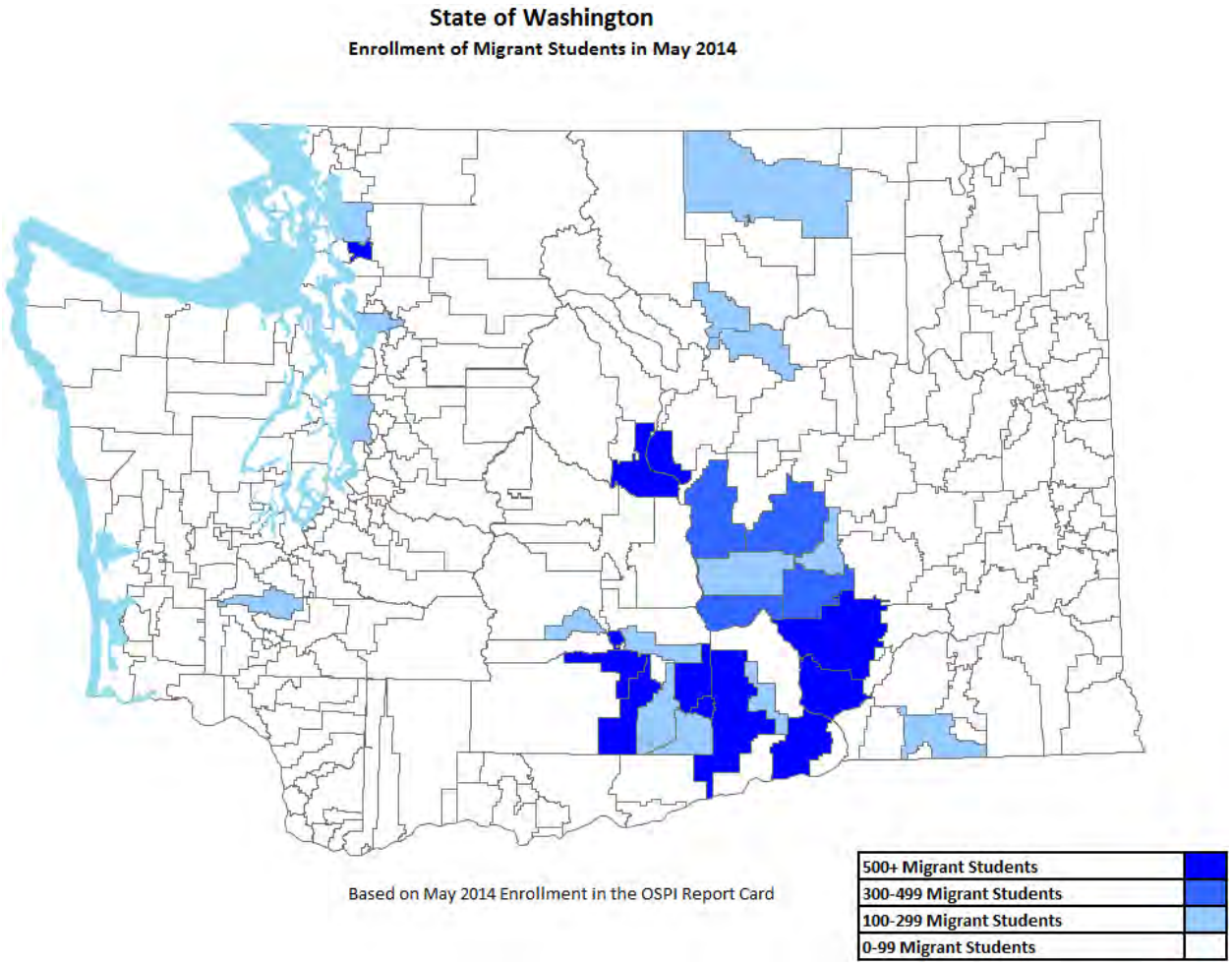
Who are Migrant Students?

What is the definition of a migrant student?

A migratory child is a child who is, or whose parent, spouse, or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker or migratory fisher, and who, in the preceding 36 months, has moved from one school district to another, to obtain or accompany such parent, spouse, or guardian, in order to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work as a principal means of livelihood. - Federal Register, Part VII, July 3, 1995

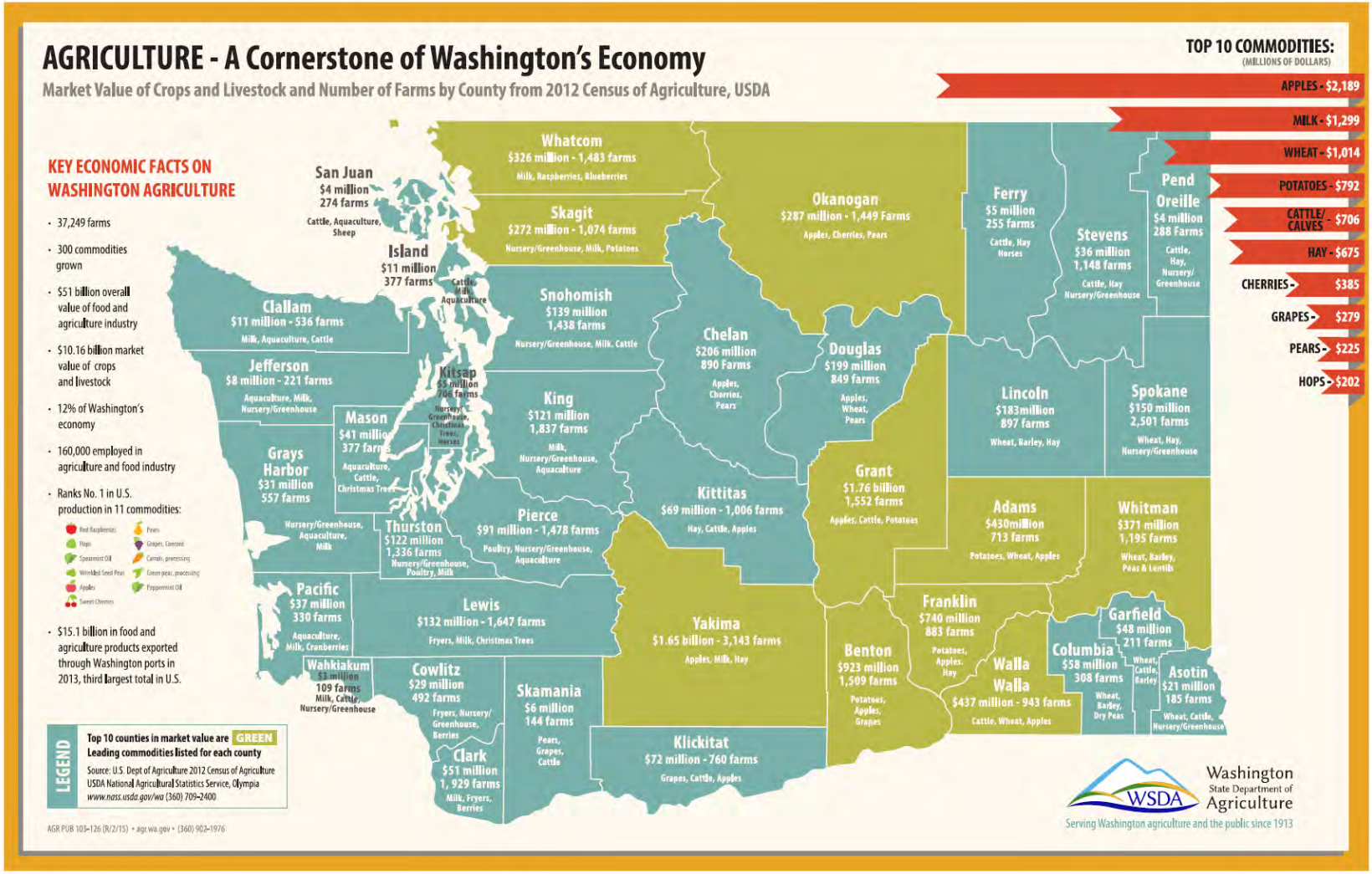
Who are the migrant students? Where do they attend school? Where are they from?

There were 20,295 migrant students or about 1.9% of the total student population of Washington. The greatest concentration of migrant students in Washington is in south-central Washington, particularly in ESD 105. The majority of migrant students migrate within the United States and are Hispanic/Latino but, according to OSPI Migrant Education staff, there are about 1,500 migrant students who migrate from outside the country. In Northwest Washington, there are many migrant students enrolled in Mount Vernon, Marysville, and Burlington-Edison School Districts. According to OSPI Migrant Education staff, small numbers of migrant students are spread throughout Western Washington and their families are often employed in seasonal fishery labor and, to a lesser extent, forestry. Some of the migrant students in Western Washington are from families employed in seasonal work in fisheries and are of Asian racial background. There are also some Native American migrant students who travel throughout the state to do season agricultural work. The following is a map populated with May 2014 enrollment data on migrant students. Please note that this map is of each district's migrant student enrollment totals rather than the percentage of migrant students out of each district's total enrollment.



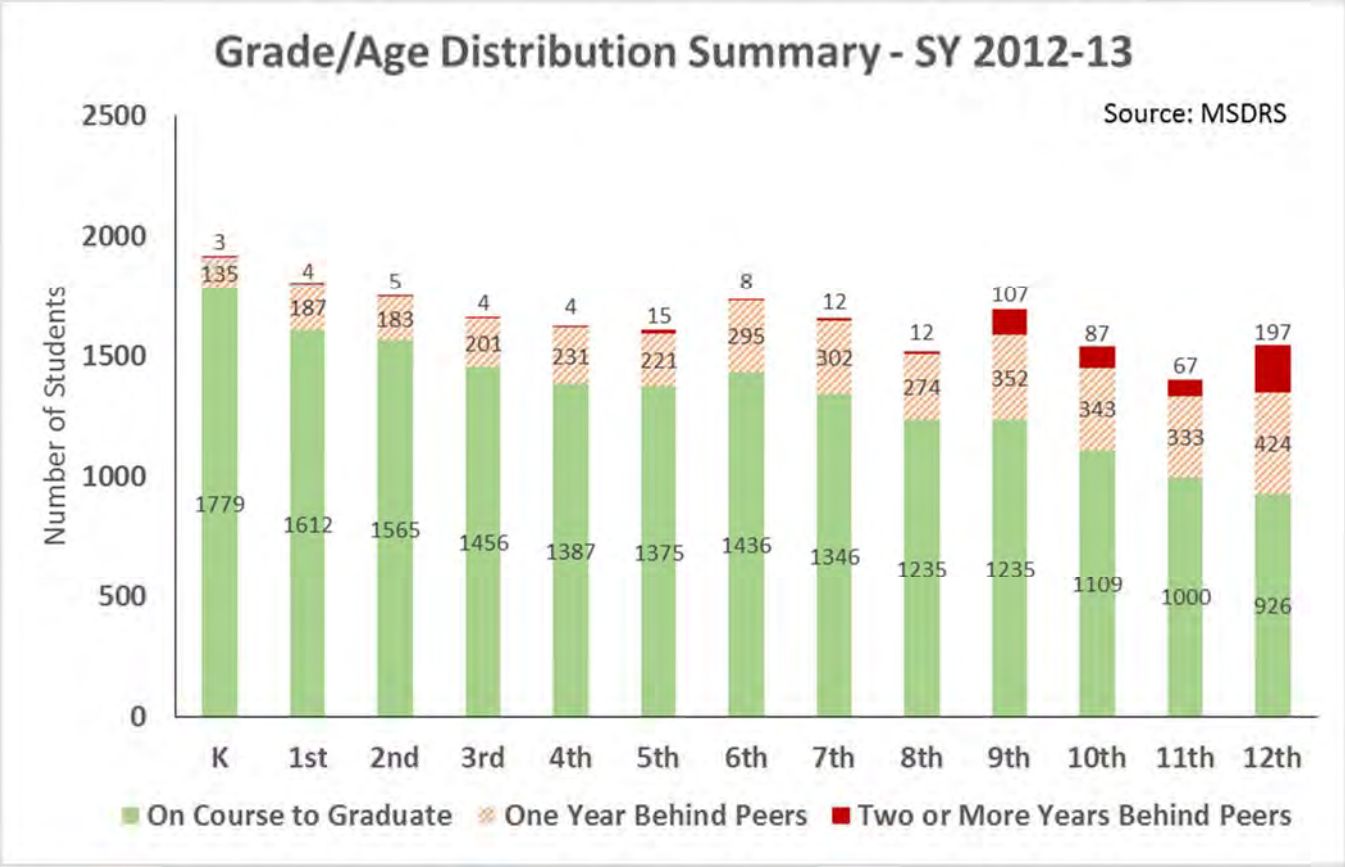
The following are districts with more than 500 migrant students:

School District	Migrant Enrollment	% of Total District Enrollment
Yakima	2,840	18.4%
Kennewick	1,919	11.4%
Wenatchee	1,397	17.9%
Pasco	1,214	7.3%
Sunnyside	1,055	16.2%
Wapato	855	25.5%
Toppenish	651	15.6%
Mount Vernon	617	9.7%
Eastmont	607	10.7%
Prosser	598	21.2%
Grandview	596	16.7%
North Franklin	566	27.3%

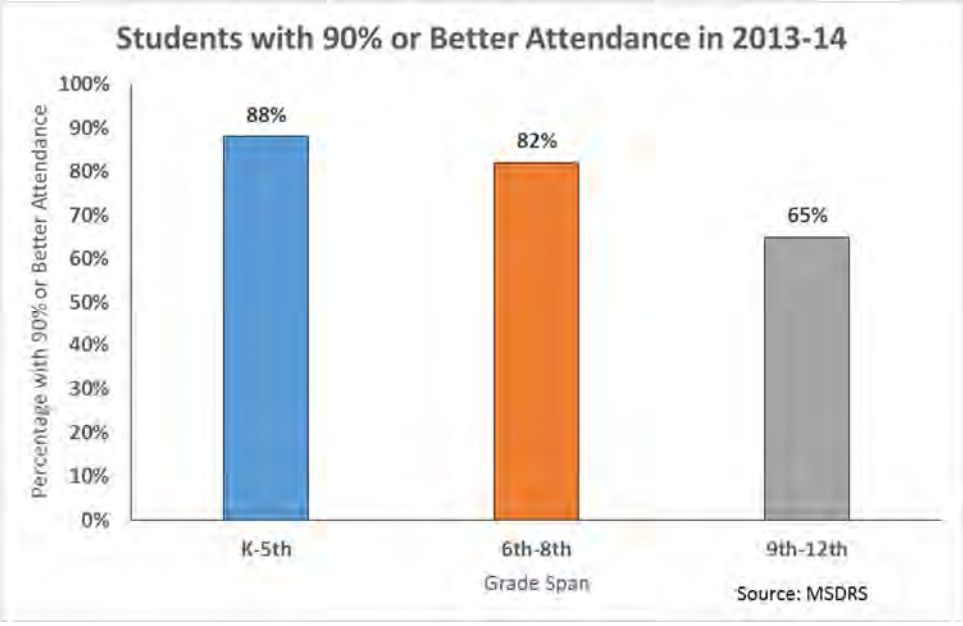


Understanding the agricultural economy in Washington is integral to understanding where the most need for migrant education is and how the need for seasonal labor influences the changing demographic of migrant students. In the map above, agricultural output is shown with counties in green being the top 10 counties by market value. Yakima, Grant, and Benton are among the top 10 and are located in approximately the same geographic area as ESD 105 where the majority of minority students are. OSPI Migrant Education staff noted that asparagus production in Washington has dropped as other countries have gained market share, thus leading to a drop in migrant students in areas of Washington that, until recently, grew enough asparagus to have a need for seasonal labor. OSPI staff stated that some areas of Washington grow crops that rely on local labor and, therefore, do not have a need for migrant laborers. In the future, the shifting agricultural economy in Washington is bound to account for changes in the migrant student demographic.

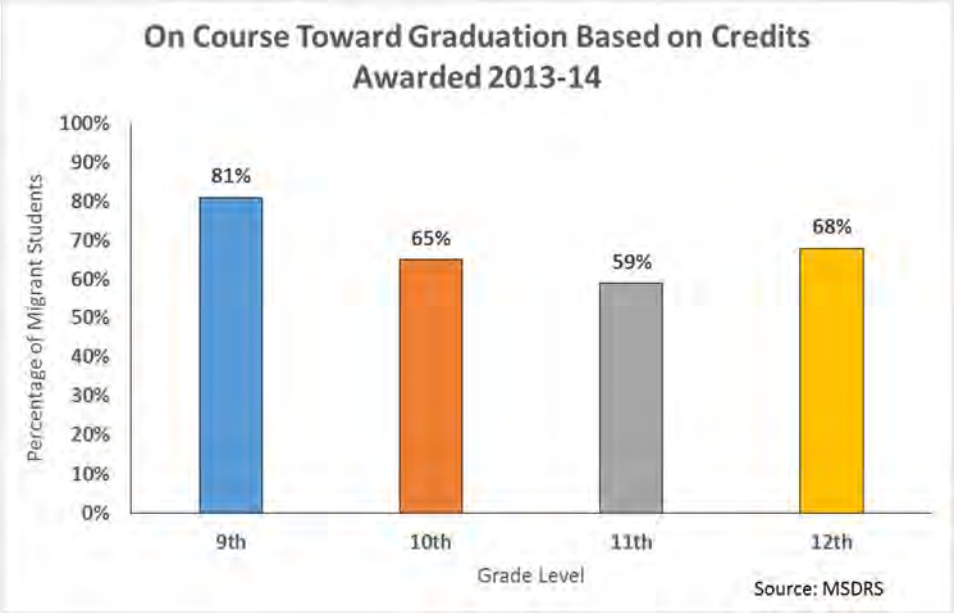
Data Show that Migrant Students are Further Behind in the Grades 9-12 than K-8



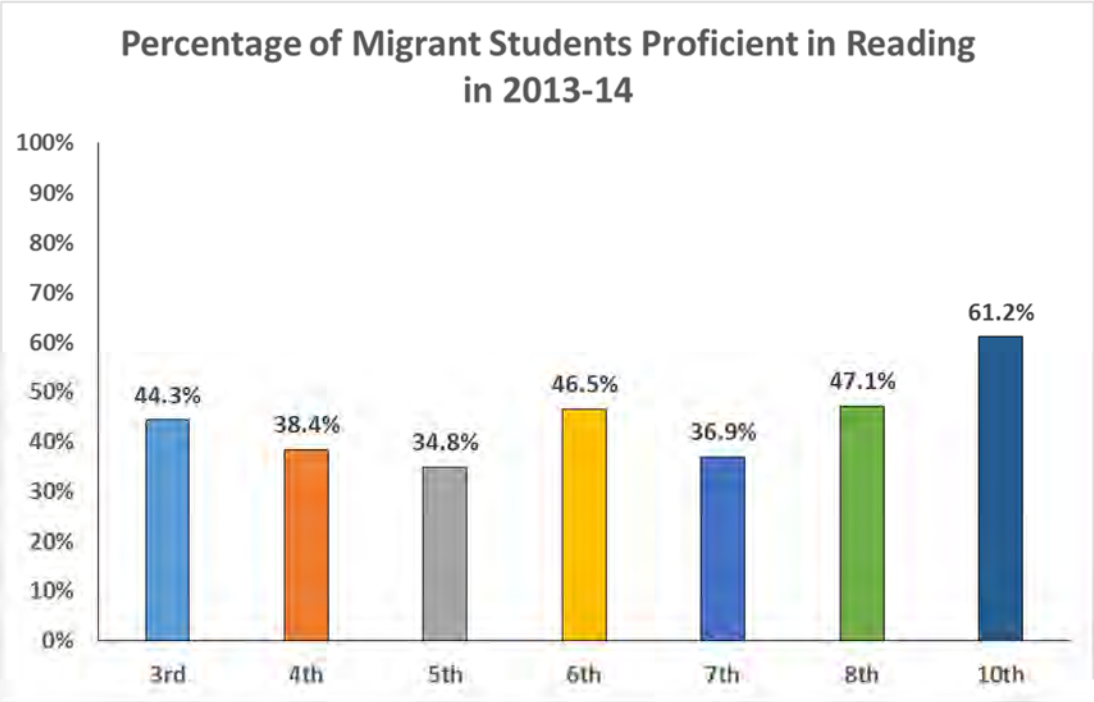
The table above is a state-level summary of whether students are at or above their grade level based on their age. It is derived by comparing the age of the student to the grade that they are in. More migrant students are behind peers as the grade level increases, suggesting migrant students who enter at an older age are farther behind or that migrant students fall further behind as they go through school.

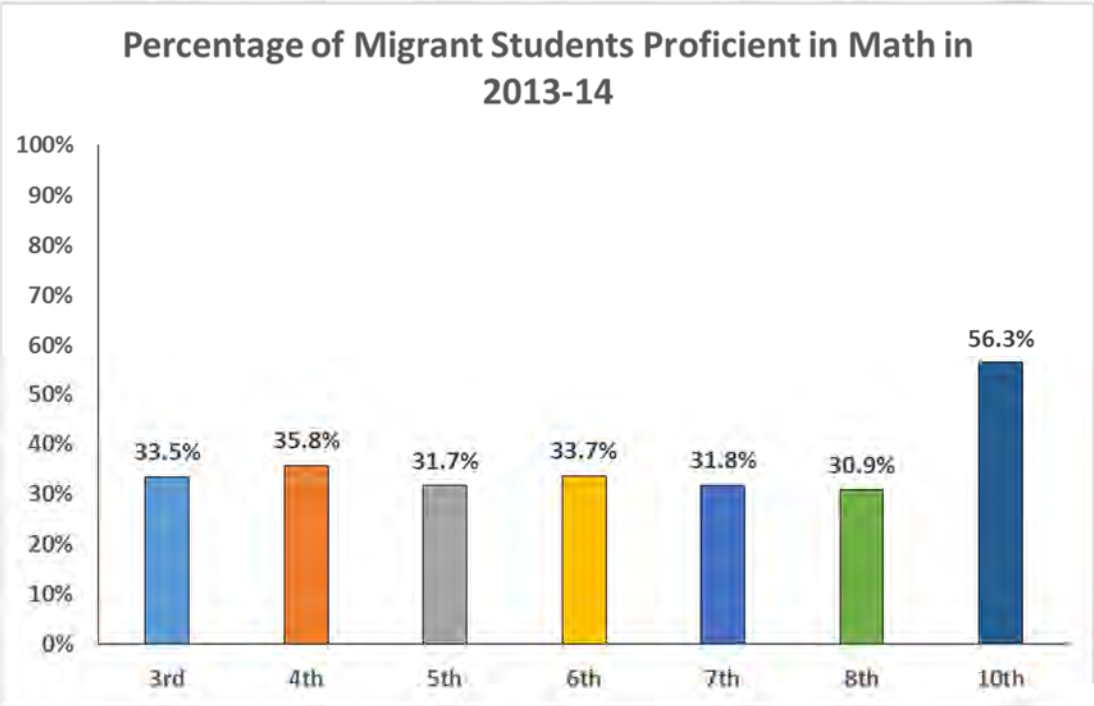


The table above shows state-level attendance data on migrant students who have 90% or better attendance. This indicator also suggests that there are more troubling trends for migrant students in high school than during lower grades. These absences in high school represent lost instructional time and may hinder a students' ability to graduate with enough credits or to pass assessments.



The table above shows state-level data on the percentage of migrant students who are on track to graduate. The data are derived by comparing CEDARS data on credits earned by migrant students to each district's local graduation requirements. These data indicate that migrant students fall behind on credit accrual by the time they are 10th graders. Along with the other data on attendance and grade/age distribution, this indicates that migrant students have difficulty transitioning to high school. Many migrant students either fall behind in high school or enter high school having already fallen behind.





The charts above show that the percentage of proficient migrant students is far lower than the All-Students group. However, contrary to the conclusions based on the other graphs that show troubling trends for migrant students in high school, migrant student assessment performance increases in 10th grade.

Unique Needs of Migrant Students

Student Mobility has a Negative Impact on Outcomes

"Student mobility, defined as students' movement into and out of schools and districts during a school year, is particularly prevalent among low-income, immigrant and minority children, whose families are often susceptible to changes in housing that precipitate changes in the schools they attend." (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2011). Research suggests that mobility has negative impacts on student outcomes (GAO, 2010). Migrant students change schools during the school year due to their family's employment in seasonal work, primarily agricultural and fishery labor in Washington. When they change schools, their academic progress is slowed and they are at risk of falling behind their peers.

Portable Assisted Student Sequence (PASS)

As the data show, many migrant students fall behind on credit accrual towards graduation. The PASS program is available to all students, but is specially designed to help students in grades 7 through 12 to get on track to graduate. It is free for migrant students while other students incur a fee. The program is semi-independent study that allows highly mobile students to earn credit by continuing the program even as they move and switch schools. The courses are also available in Spanish.

Challenges beyond the Classroom

The literature review revealed a variety of non-academic challenges noted by experts. The following are issues that migrant students may face:

- Health complications (malnutrition, illness, et cetera) beyond those of other students and lack of adequate healthcare;
- Mobility that results in a difficult time fitting in and connecting to the community;
- Language barriers – many migrant students are also English Language Learners;
- Lack of parental knowledge of the American educational system;
- Necessity to work at an early age during high school or, potentially, before high school;
- Living conditions, including substandard housing, that are not conducive to student success; and
- Effects of poverty, including nutrition and the ability to pay for school fees.

What SBE Policy Work affects migrant students?

What SBE policy work impacts migrant students? What are guiding questions for future SBE policy work to improve migrant student outcomes?

There are potential areas where SBE policy work can impact migrant student outcomes. This section of the memo brainstorms the pros and cons of potential SBE policy work regarding migrant students. The following are ideas from the author and do not represent staff recommendations:

Graduation Requirements. Goals of the migrant education program are to help the students reach graduation or to pass a General Educational Development exam and to help them transition to postsecondary education or employment.

- **High School and Beyond planning** is an important part of informing migrant students about their path to graduation and of ways to transition to postsecondary education or employment. How can the SBE best serve migrant students during possible future work on the High School and Beyond Plan?
    - The HSBP is instrumental in informing migrant students and their families of graduation requirements and supports available to migrant students such as the PASS program. It

also may provide information on how to keep on track towards graduation while switching schools during migration.

- **Assessment alternatives** offer students options to graduate even if they do not pass the state assessment. Are there assessment alternatives that would increase the graduation rate of migrant students?
    - According to Ms. Sylvia Reyna, OSPI Migrant Education Supervisor, districts primarily use the Collections of Evidence (COE), but the COE still presents language barriers for the many migrant students who have limited English proficiency. She stated that Migrant Education staff are encouraging districts to expand access to the American College Testing (ACT) as an assessment alternative. The ACT preparation manual is available in Spanish.
- **Competency-based crediting** provides options for migrant students to earn credit for World Language proficiency. SBE collaborated with OSPI to develop World Language competency crediting. This allows students to earn credits for speaking and writing Spanish, although Spanish speakers may not have adequate writing skills unless they are formally educated in Spanish or bilingual education

Achievement Index. Neither the state nor federal accountability frameworks currently include migrant students as a discrete student group that Adequate Yearly Progress is applicable to. This results in less visibility of the migrant student group because there is less reporting compared to other federal student groups. Unfortunately, there are a number of good reasons why the migrant student group is not included in the state or federal accountability frameworks.

- **Include a migrant student group in the Index.** Could the Achievement Index include a migrant student group?
    - Migrant students are not currently a student group to which the federal Adequate Yearly Progress measure applies.
    - Assessment data on migrant students are limited due to mobility. There is a lower participation rate and inconsistent reporting due to school changes.
    - Many districts that serve migrant students have small numbers of migrant students in their districts. Large schools in large districts would be the most likely to have a sufficient N-count of migrant students to be included in the Index.
- **Lower N-count suppression from 20 to 10.** Could the Achievement Index N-size suppression threshold be reduced from 20 to 10 so that the migrant student group would be included in data on more schools?
    - Federal suppression guidelines allow for 10 or more students to be reported but the Achievement Index uses a suppression threshold of 20. Student groups are included in the accountability system less often with a higher suppression threshold.
- **Develop whole-child indicators. Attendance rates and on-track credit accrual** towards graduation are monitored by the Migrant Education Program to ensure that as many migrant students as possible reach graduation. **Mobility** is included in the Massachusetts accountability system. Are there other whole-child indicators that could be suitable for a state-level accountability system and would provide accountability for serving migrant students?
- **Washington Achievement Award for Migrant Student Graduation Rate.** If a migrant student group was included in the Index, how could the state recognize successful migrant education and replicate best practices in serving migrant students. Migrant student graduation rate could

be used to offer a Washington Achievement Award or it could be included as part of the special recognition award for gap reduction.

ESSB 5491 Indicators of Educational System Health Report. The system health report could include a measure dedicated to monitoring the performance of migrant students or simply be disaggregated further to include migrant student data.

- **Include a measure dedicated to migrant students or disaggregate further** so that the system health report monitors how well migrant students are served.

Bibliography

GAO – United States Government Accountability Office. (2010). *K-12 Education: May Challenges Arise in Educating Students Who Change Schools Frequently*, GAO-11-40.

MSDRS – Migrant Student Data, Recruitment and Support. (2015). MSDRS Statewide Dashboard. Retrieved from: www.msdr.org

OSPI – Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2015). *OSPI Website*. Retrieved from: www.k12.wa.us

Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (2011). *A Revolving Door: Challenges and Solutions to Educating Mobile Students.* MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Parker Teed, Operations and Data Coordinator, at parker.teed@k12.wa.us.